

Media Advisory

from the South Carolina Forestry Commission



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Forestry Commission lifting statewide Red Flag Fire Alert

COLUMBIA—The South Carolina Forestry Commission is lifting the statewide Red Flag Fire Alert, effective at 6 a.m. Wednesday, March 30.

The Forestry Commission is discontinuing the alert because the dangerous conditions have largely abated. Not only have wind speeds dropped since the weekend, but widespread cloud cover and an associated rise in air moisture will prevent fuels on the ground from becoming increasingly dry, returning most of the state to conditions that are safer and more conducive to outdoor burning. The likelihood of rain statewide Thursday also will lessen the fire danger for the next few days.

The unsafe conditions that prompted the agency's strong cautionary statement against outdoor burning resulted in a busy weekend (and Monday) for Forestry Commission firefighters. Even with the Red Flag Fire Alert in place, agency personnel responded to 95 wildfires that unofficially burned more than 1,200 acres in just three days. Of those fires, 32 have been contained within firebreaks, but still require daily monitoring.

The alert was issued Saturday, March 26 to discourage people from burning outdoors while weather conditions presented an elevated risk of wildfire. Forecasts for most of the state this past weekend included much-stronger-than-normal winds, including very high gusts, along with low relative humidity, creating the potential for outdoor fires to escape easily and spread rapidly.

Although the Forestry Commission is lifting its Red Flag Fire Alert, agency officials still urge extreme vigilance when burning outdoors. State law requires anyone planning to burn outdoors (outside of city limits) to notify the Forestry Commission in advance and take the proper precautions. Those include clearing a firebreak around the burn area, having water and/or tools on standby to keep the fire contained and never leaving a fire unattended.

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As the only state agency responsible for wildfire suppression in all unincorporated areas of the state, the South Carolina Forestry Commission protects 12.9 million acres from wildland fire. More than 500 county, municipal and volunteer fire departments operate more than 1,100 fire stations in South Carolina. The Forestry Commission cooperates with these departments to prevent and control structural and wildland fires, employing highly trained firefighters and specialized equipment when fires burn into forested areas that are difficult to reach.

Stay in the know with SCFC's mobile app

The South Carolina Forestry Commission has a smartphone app that allows citizens, media and fire departments to view current wildfires and burn notifications, check the latest fire weather, receive push notifications about important news such as burning bans and red flag fire alerts, and much more.

To receive push notifications, users must opt in when first starting the app. Push notifications will alert you about current burning bans, Red Flag fire alerts and other wildfire-related warnings. Notifications will never consist of ads or promotional messages.

To download the app, search "South Carolina Forestry Commission" on either the Apple or Google Play stores.

